

This review addresses the fiction that Eisenhower kept us out of the Indochina mess as I've not seen it elsewhere. It first nicely with his explanation of the famous farewell warning. I understand that was written by was it Larsen who worked in the WH. ...There is a bit more on Karl Hess, who is radical as hell now. Left, that is, perhaps anarchistic. His first real start was with Barry Goldwater, in the Presidential campaign. I think as speech-writer. Then he did a book on his shift. Then he was at the IPS, where I met him. He has made speeches to the smallest groups. He drove 100 miles one night of which I know to speak to what could not have been 50 people. He lived on a boat in DC, in a comane, and the last time I saw him he was mixing his scholarship with welding. He is very bright and very articulate. Seemingly very sincere, too. And persuaded there is an can be no good in the world. This is my impression, not his words. HR: please return for TIGER file. HW

The Ike Years All Over Again

Post
10-19-72
EISENHOWER: And the American Crusades.

By Herbert S. Parmet

(Macmillan, 660 pp., \$12.95)

Reviewed by
Karl Hess

The reviewer, who served briefly on special assignment at the White House during the Eisenhower administration, is a visiting fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies.

If you want to relive the Eisenhower years, this is the book for you. It has what seems to be 40 million useful references to Eisenhower sources, piled up as the foundation for what is almost a daily log of the General-President's years in the White House, and the several immediately before, as he backed and filled about heading what eventually he came to see as his bounden duty to lead the nation.

It cites dozens of interviews. It obviously is written by a man who has read himself bleary in his subject but who, at the end of it all, simply says that to call Eisenhower "a great or good or even a weak President misses the point. He was merely necessary."

Necessary for what? By contenting himself with observing Eisenhower rather than with trying to understand him, his friends, his particular role in the society, Herbert Parmet does not provide even

answer. But because he is such a voracious reader and studious observer, the clues are all there.

First, there is Eisenhower the anti-Communist. Like Kennedy-Johnson-Nixon, Eisenhower saw the confrontation with communism both speculatively and apocalyptically. Eisenhower's New Look defense policy, diplomatically extended through John Foster Dulles' brinkmanship, meant to deter the Soviets and the Chinese, at least, from big moves in the world by rattling the sword of nuclear retaliation. As Parmet meticulously recounts—without seeming to be impressed—Eisenhower's rhetoric about the New Look was seriously compromised by the old look of some of his crucial actions: when he landed Marines in Lebanon, for instance.

Also, when Eisenhower supported the covert U.S. operation that overthrew the Guatemalan government, he was well into a world of old-fashioned, even if newly-equipped, coup and counter-coup, terror and covert warfare. That, as a matter of fact, is just the way Eisenhower wanted to fight the war in Indochina—secretly and discreetly. But he did want to fight it. On that he was as dedicated

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The Eisenhower Years... All Over

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work as Kennedy, Johnson, or Nixon. (If there was a difference in style it would probably be mostly in contrast to Johnson. Eisenhower was dead set against peace and involvement. The policy of ordering peace while talking peace probably would have appeared to him more, and the early Kennedy policy of secret raids most of all—except that Eisenhower always seemed skeptical of how well such secrets could be kept. His explicit skepticism about the U-2 overflights was, of course, brilliantly justified.)

Beyond his fervent anti-communism, there is another aspect to Eisenhower that might mark a very special (and necessary) place for him in our country's development: his total visceral and intellectual commitment to the recti-

tude of American corporate enterprise—as he understood it from his closest friends, all big businessmen—disposed him to believe that the expansion of capitalist enterprise around the globe would, ultimately, beat back the Communist menace by putting it to shame.

Although Eisenhower is justly famous for having said that we must hold onto Indochina because of its raw materials, he should be equally famous for the much more sophisticated notion, emphatically ascribed to him in this book, of wanting to assure the freedom of American corporations to export capital abroad, to buy as much of the world as possible, as a basic extension of U.S. foreign policy and cold-war strategy. Frustrated by the failure to elect Wendell Wilkie to head the expansion of American corporate enterprise

into the ownership of One World, the great financiers and industrialists who supported Eisenhower (while middling entrepreneurs and old-time conservatives denounced him) may have thought him quite necessary to safeguard the expansionism which has now flowered, under three other presidents, into the age of the multi-national corporation.

This brings up that most perplexing of all Eisenhower riddles: Eisenhower's farewell speech in which he warned against the excesses of a military-industrial complex which he saw as threatening to become the dominant force in American policy-making.

Why was the man who was prepared to oust governments, dispatch Marines, talk of massive retaliation, overfly the U.S.S.R., and angrily rebut anyone tried to tell him how to run an

Army—why was such a man so concerned at the end about the military he had faithfully served and the industry he had painstakingly supported? Parmet isn't even curious.

Again the clues, if not the conclusions, are scattered throughout this storehouse collection of facts. One is the context of the speech. Eisenhower spelled out the menace to be that of a "scientific-technological elite" and not just the MIC abstractly. To him, real business meant the big banks, the big owners, the vastly rich folks whom he enjoyed so much as personal friends. The gunslinger conglomeratists, who shot to the top under Kennedy, apparently appalled him. He was an old-fashioned capitalist. He seems never to have been troubled by the fantastic support given, say, the banking system by federal policy.

But he was troubled by

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the thought that the new, scientifically-based weapons companies would muscle their way into policy-influencing positions. Also, he seems to have been disturbed by the possibilities of a garrison state, totally dominated by a defense budget. He was never disturbed by the company-store domination of the lives of most ordinary Americans by the financial elite which already does own control of most the capital industry, as well as control of those who make policy. Maybe that just seemed traditional to the General-President.

At any rate, deep concern along these lines may be merely academic after all. Thanks to Eisenhower's foremost bequest to a grateful nation, Richard Nixon, it looks like we are going to have both a garrison state and a company store anyway.